

2011

# Recovery Month—Fast Facts

## Problem Gambling

National surveys indicate that 1 in 20 people suffer from problem gambling. Pathological gambling is a psychiatric disorder associated with substantial personal, family, and societal consequences.

Certain demographic characteristics are associated with increased rates of problem gambling, and some populations are more vulnerable to elevated rates of problem and pathological gambling:

- Youth, young adults and racial and ethnic minorities have high rates of problem gambling.
- People with substance abuse disorders have 2 - 10 times increased risk for problem gambling.
- Problem gambling is 2 – 8 times more common in individuals with major depression, anxiety, and personality disorders.

Gambling among older adults differs than younger age groups because:

- Many older adults face life transitions and losses (illness, isolation, retirement, deaths).
- Older adults who have gambled away their retirement savings do not have working years to make up their losses.
- Many older adults may not understand addiction, making them less likely to identify a gambling problem.
- Many older adults hide their gambling because of the stigma associated with it, and health professionals rarely assess for problem gambling.

### Some common signs and symptoms of problem gambling:

- Gambling to reduce depression and worries
- Lying about gambling habits
- Gambling alone or more often
- Going without basic needs in order to gamble
- Needing to gamble more and more money in order to get the desired effect
- Having financial problems caused by gambling

National  
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Washington State  
Department of Social  
& Health Services

**DBHR** Division of Behavioral  
Health and Recovery

Washington  
**Recovery Help Line**  
24-Hr Help for Substance Abuse, Problem Gambling & Mental Health  
**866-789-1511**  
[www.waRecoveryHelpLine.org](http://www.waRecoveryHelpLine.org)